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Note verbale dated 11 December 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to inform that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/37 B of 4 April 2011, a workshop was held in Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire from 28 to 30 October 2013, under the auspices of the United Nations, in support of the first phase of the first assessment cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire has the honour to transmit to the Secretary-General a summary of the workshop (see annex).

The Permanent Mission kindly requests that the present note and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 76.

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Annex to the Note verbale dated 11 December 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the seventh workshop held under the auspices of the United Nations in support of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects

Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 to 30 October 2013

1. The present report focuses on critical information for the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects and for the Group of Experts as they develop the South Atlantic region component of the first global integrated marine assessment (hereafter referred to as the "World Ocean Assessment"). It specifically highlights the findings of the workshop relating to South Atlantic region information gaps, capacity needs for marine assessments in the region, suggestions for the development of the World Ocean Assessment and next steps in the production of the assessment. These insights were synthesized from the presentations, breakout group discussions and concluding session of the workshop. The annexes to the report provide other details on the workshop and its outcomes, including the agenda, list of participants, summaries of the presentations and breakout group results. The latter provide an inventory of environmental and socioeconomic marine assessments, including specific sources of information and experts relevant to both the South Atlantic regions and parts III to VI of the World Ocean Assessment outline.[1]

Background: objectives, history and participants

2. According to the recommendations made at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process in June 2011, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/231 of 24 December 2011, workshops were considered key mechanisms in the World Ocean Assessment.

3. Following these recommendations workshops were organized in Santiago (September 2011) to cover the eastern Pacific Ocean; Sanya, China (February 2012) to cover the eastern and south-eastern Asian Seas; Brussels (June 2012) to cover the North Atlantic Ocean, the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea; Miami, Florida, United States of America (November 2012) to cover the wider Caribbean; Maputo (December 2012) to cover the western Indian Ocean; and Brisbane, Australia (February 2013) to cover the south-west Pacific.

4. This workshop for the South Atlantic region was held from 28 to 30 October 2013 in Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, under the auspices of the United Nations, in support of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects.

[1] All annexes to the report are available from the Regular Process website (www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/global_reporting.htm).

5. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Enhance dialogue among marine experts within Governments, international government organizations and regional initiatives
- Develop an inventory of environmental and socioeconomic marine assessments
- Consider the linkages among assessments, including driving factors and the state of the marine environment
- Identify marine assessment capacity-building needs and consider means to address those needs.

6. A seminar of national experts was held in Brazil from 11 to 13 September 2013, as a preparatory step to the workshop in Côte d'Ivoire. The expert seminar presented information on a participative survey and subsequent analysis of existing marine assessments and data sources in Brazil relating to the Brazilian part of the south-west Atlantic coast, in particular, information gaps, capacity-building needs for marine assessments in the country, and suggestions regarding future steps for the effective implementation of the World Ocean Assessment in the South Atlantic. These insights were synthesized and fed into the discussions of the workshop in Grand-Bassam, in particular at the working group sessions. The final synthesis for the South Atlantic, including additions from western, central and southern Africa and south-west Atlantic subregions is provided in annex D.

7. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire, with the technical and financial support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the secretariat for the Abidjan Convention and the European Union, hosted the workshop. The workshop was facilitated by Co-Chairs Alberto Pacheco (Regional Seas Programme Coordinator, UNEP), Beatrice Padovani Ferreira (member of the Group of Experts) and Romain Chancerel (Marine and Ecosystem Officer, secretariat of the Abidjan Convention). The workshop received the support of Allah Kouadio Rémi, Minister for Environment, Urban Sanitation and Sustainable Development, who officially opened the workshop during the opening ceremony. The opening ceremony also included statements by Alvaro Ceriani, representative of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat, the Mayor of Grand-Bassam and Miss Bintou Traoré, Miss Earth Côte d'Ivoire 2013.

8. Participants (see annex A) included experts from 17 countries within the wider South Atlantic region, including Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Togo and Uruguay. Missing countries included Angola, Gambia, Namibia, Senegal and South Africa. The panel also included experts from countries outside the region and many local, regional and international organizations. Three members of the Group of Experts, Beatrice Padovani Ferreira (Brazil), Renison Ruwa (Kenya) and Peter Harris (Australia), also participated in the workshop.

Conduct of the workshop

9. The workshop was conducted in accordance with the agenda (see annex B). However, some minor changes were undertaken in order to accommodate the late arrival of the Minister on day 1 and the extension of working group sessions to the

morning of 30 October at the request of the experts, to allow more time to finalize the tables. The minutes of the workshop, including plenary presentations and discussions, are provided in annex C.

10. The working groups were composed of national experts registered on the basis of their area of expertise. The methodology used by the groups consisted in listing the institutions and sources of information on the different subject areas contained in the table, conducting assessments on the available information, identifying gaps in the information and determining capacity-building needs and recommendations for the implementation of the World Ocean Assessment at the national, regional and international levels.

11. A synthesis of the group discussions was presented in the plenary by a reporter designated by each of the groups and discussed in the last plenary session. The present report is a summary of the South Atlantic information gaps and capacity needs for marine assessments in the South Atlantic region as determined by the experts at the workshop.

South Atlantic region information gaps

12. This section summarizes some of the gaps identified by the four working groups, namely, group I on biophysical aspects, group II on food security and safety aspects, group III on socioeconomic aspects and group IV on biodiversity aspects.

Group I: Biophysical aspects

13. The principal gaps identified by the experts are:

- Absence of continuous long-time series concerning sea-level rise and its impact on the coastal and marine environment
- Absence of information on the knock-on effect of El Niño in the subregion, especially in West Africa
- Poor link between meteorological and oceanographic institutes
- Lack of continuous long-time series on acidification, especially in situ measurements at tropical latitudes
- Scarcity of studies regarding the factors influencing surface layer and species variation, notably studies based on in situ measurements of surface layers and plankton.

Group II: food security and safety aspects

14. Instead of listing the gaps on the information on fish stocks, group II made the following analysis:

15. In the South Atlantic region, many national institutions and regional organizations conduct assessments of the status of fish and shellfish stocks and fisheries. Although fisheries statistics are available, there is a lack of continuous time series in many areas. In fact, many assessments are project-related so when financing stops, the data collection is discontinued. This happens in all countries; the only exceptions are Argentina and Uruguay, where fairly complete time series are available for the most economically important fish stocks. Vessel availability for fishery independent surveys is a constraint for the whole area.

16. The principal gaps identified by the experts on the economic evaluation of fishing activities are:

- Scarcity of evaluations of economic consequences (risk assessment) of disasters and impact of other activities on fisheries and the living standards of fishers
- Scarcity of studies on the impacts of the global economy on fisheries
- Lack of data on post-fishing losses (during processing, marketing, etc.)
- Absence of studies on the impact of red tides on fisheries in West Africa
- Lack of information on the contribution of artisanal fisheries.

17. The principal gaps identified by the experts on fishing practices and health and safety are:

- Issue of stock assessments of species caught by both the industrial and artisanal sectors; they are frequently pooled together, although some countries have good reporting systems
- Scarcity of information on illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries, although the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) evaluates the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries country by country
- Scarcity of assessments of incidental catches of marine mammals, turtles and birds, especially in the African countries
- Scarcity of information on the number of people employed by the sector
- Ineffective implementation of health and safety control systems (poor reporting mechanisms).

Group III: socioeconomic aspects

18. The principal gaps identified by the experts on pollution are:

- Poor reporting mechanisms and/or difficulty in accessing existing documentation (reports) on oil leakages and spills
- Lack of information on the types and amounts of oil dumped into the sea and trends for the next decade
- Poor capacity in the region to assess the disposal of solid waste in the ocean
- Lack of studies on socioeconomic impacts.

19. The principal gap identified by the experts regarding the impacts of exploration and exploitation activities is the lack of regulation of offshore oil and gas exploration and exploitation. Regarding sand and gravel mining and socioeconomic implications, the principal information gaps identified by the experts are:

- Paucity of studies on aggregate mining
- Scarcity of studies on land reclamations and habitat modifications.

20. The principal gaps identified by the experts on erosion and its socioeconomic implications are:

- Paucity of time series data on coastal erosion owing to poor modelling capabilities and difficulty in implementing long-term funding mechanisms
- Lack of decision tools and training for managers
- Lack of socioeconomic data
- Lack of research on adaptation and technological solutions.

21. The principal gaps identified by the experts on tourism and its ecosystems and socioeconomic implications are:

- Scarcity of studies on the tourism industry
- Poor capacity to assess tourism and all associated aspects, namely, economic, environmental and social aspects.

Group IV: Biodiversity aspects

22. The principal gaps identified by the experts regarding coastal areas and continental shelf habitats are:

- Scarcity of information on deep sea and continental shelf habitats
- Lack of information on the current status of the mangrove species; in this regard, surveys and geographic information system (GIS) mapping projects need to be conducted
- Scarcity of mapping programmes of seagrass.

23. The principal gaps identified by the experts on information on distribution and number are:

- Lack of information on the capture of industrial fishing, especially the juvenile fraction
- Lack of research on vulnerability and adaptation in response to climate change
- Scarcity of close monitoring programmes of cetaceans, especially in West Africa
- Absence of monitoring programmes for certain estuarine areas, especially in West Africa
- Scarcity of knowledge with regard to deep-water corals (Mauritania, etc.)
- Scarcity of information on plankton.

24. The principal gaps identified by the experts on cumulative pressures are:

- Absence of studies on the causes of stranding of cetaceans in West Africa
- Lack of information on current patterns and bathymetry in some areas
- Scarcity of studies on the impacts of deforestation
- Paucity of water quality/chemical surveys and monitoring programmes.

Capacity needs and suggestions for marine assessments in the South Atlantic region

25. A major capacity need facing many countries in the South Atlantic region is the ability to conduct state of marine environment assessments at national to regional spatial scales. This is mainly owing to the lack of funding but also to the lack of resources and capability to conduct such studies, especially at the local and national levels. It is important to note, however, that capacity needs are unevenly distributed and that South-South cooperation also represents an opportunity for filling existing gaps. The experts therefore suggested that more capacity-building activities be organized under the umbrella of the Regular Process.

26. Another important gap concerns the geographical discontinuity of information in the South Atlantic region, more precisely, the scarcity of studies on biophysical and socioeconomic dynamics in the region. This was deemed an important gap that hinders the development of an integrated, regional assessment. Optimizing the coordination of marine environmental data collection activities within countries and within the region should contribute to the production of an integrated, regional assessment.

27. The experts acknowledged the importance of the workshop and suggested that more initiatives be developed in order to improve the sharing of information and experience in the South Atlantic region. This was recalled by the representative of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, Alvaro Ceriani, in his closing remarks (see annex C).

28. In addition to the issue of geographical discontinuity in the information, the experts identified the discontinuity in data time series as another important gap in the assessment of the state of the marine and coastal environment in the South Atlantic. In fact, the lack of long, consistent time series hinders the integrated regional assessment of long-term biophysical and socioeconomic dynamics in the region.

29. The issue of "funding gaps", where projects are completed, funding ends, teams of experts are dispersed and then additional funding is obtained requiring the project to restart, is another impediment to the production of an integrated, regional assessment. This highlights the importance of securing sustainable funding mechanisms that will allow the production of long-term, consistent data series.

Next steps in the production of the World Ocean Assessment

30. The results of the workshop will be shared with the Group of Experts to inform the drafting of the South Atlantic region component of the World Ocean Assessment. The assessment timeline includes the following key steps:

- Further nominations by States to the Pool of Experts
- Preparation of working papers for each chapter (last quarter of 2013)
- Preparation of draft chapters based on working papers (October 2013-March 2014)
- Production of the first draft of the first World Ocean Assessment (April-May 2014)
- Peer review and review process (June-August 2014)

- Final draft (September 2014)
- Submission to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process (December 2014)
- Publication (February 2015).

31. Lastly, participants were asked to send any additional information and names of experts to Romain Chancerel (romain.chancerel@unep.org) for inclusion in the present report or its annexes. Participants were also encouraged to join the Pool of Experts and, if selected by the Group of Experts, to engage in drafting the South Atlantic region component of the World Ocean Assessment.

Conclusions

32. In conclusion, the workshop successfully met its objectives in terms of attendance and material delivered during the presentation and working group sessions. In fact, 17 out of the 25 countries in the South Atlantic region attended the workshop, which demonstrates their particular interest in the World Ocean Assessment. The working group sessions allowed the participants to identify and integrate relevant sources of information regarding the state of the marine and coastal environment, including studies, documents and reports, and to identify key individuals and institutions to engage in the process as well as major gaps in the information.

33. On day 1, the presentations delivered by the Group of Experts and representatives of relevant United Nations agencies allowed the participants to familiarize themselves with the Regular Process and lay the ground for the working group sessions.

34. The discussions in the working group sessions on days 2 and 3 were fruitful and allowed the participants to identify the main sources of information. However, they highlighted that some preliminary work should have been done at the country level in order to capture all the necessary information. Also, the absence of delegates of some countries with extensive coastlines in the South Atlantic (Angola, Namibia and South Africa, among others) was noted and their information was missed. Therefore, although the workshop was very useful in raising the profile of the World Ocean Assessment in the region, it may not have reached its potential in terms of the material delivered for the preparation of the working paper at the end of 2013.

35. Some country delegates requested that a draft report be circulated prior to the final version in order to complement the work delivered during the workshop. Some studies undertaken by national agencies may not be readily accessible to the public and additional work will be required to undertake further investigation at the national level in order to provide a comprehensive inventory of the information available.

36. After consultation with the members of the Group of Experts and the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, it was recalled that the present report should be based on the information produced during the workshop only. Therefore, the tables were not circulated to the participants for further additions for the purpose of this report. However, it was recalled that the World Ocean Assessment was designed to be a continuous process and that the participation of countries will be

welcomed at any stage, notably through the nomination of experts to the Pool of Experts.

37. Another issue raised during the meeting was the development of cooperation mechanisms between the countries of the South Atlantic region. In particular, the workshop pointed out the importance of reinforcing the link between the West African and South-West Atlantic subregions. It was suggested that a regional workshop be organized in order to present the biophysical and socioeconomic connections in greater depth and develop this South-South cooperation between the two subregions.

38. Lastly, the support from institutions with a regional scope such as the Abidjan Convention or the peace and cooperation zone of the South Atlantic was deemed very important, especially in the coordination of capacity-building activities at the national levels, the integration of assessments at the subregional level and the development of South-South cooperation mechanisms in the South Atlantic region.